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TONGSUN PARK'S CONTACTS WITH U.S. INTELLIGENCE

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Washington society figure Tongsun Park had a longtime relationship with U.S. intelligence officers, who over 12 years used him to obtain information and at least considered him for more exotic duties, according to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The committee concluded that the contacts with Park between 1959 and 1971 were "limited," that intelligence agencies say he has never been con-

sidered "an asset," and that from what it could learn, Park had no "formal relationship" with any spy agency.

But in a report on what U.S. intelligence and other officials knew of South Korean influence-buying in Washington, the committee yesterday provided the first indication of how Park's life was intertwined in Washington with contacts with U.S. intelligence agents.

The bulk of the 50-page report details much of the information already

publicly disclosed by the House foreign operations subcommittee, headed by Rep. Donald Fraser, D-Minn., on the extent of U.S. officials' knowledge of the efforts of Park and the South Korean KCIA to buy influence in Congress.

THE SENATE COMMITTEE concluded that various U.S. agencies knew of KCIA activities aimed at Congress as early as 1970 and of Park's activities as early as 1971, in-

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cluding his use of the George Town Club "as a front to channel campaign funds to congressmen."

It said that information mostly developed by intelligence agencies, and also the State Department and Justice Department, was not acted on in a way "commensurate with the magnitude of the activities involved," but that it could not prove the lack of action "was an intentional cover-up" or closet support for the Korean activities.

The report's discussion of contacts between intelligence officials and Park, who started working for the Korean CIA about 1969, provided a new view of the activities of the millionaire rice merchant-influence buyer who became a male Perle Mesta in Washington society.

The report gave the following examples of what the committee called Park's "limited contacts" with U.S. intelligence officials:

- "Beginning in 1959 and for several years thereafter, U.S. intelligence officers met with Park on occasion to obtain information and/or to assess him as a prospective asset." The latter term translates here as possible operative.

- There was "intelligence interest" in 1962 in Park's heading a New York "placement service" for South Koreans educated in this country and seeking "employment" back home, although the organization was never created. However, the report said, Park did help negotiate a \$1,500 grant to a South Korean placement organization in 1961. The grant was made by the Asia Foundation, a CIA front from 1951 to 1967, but Park told the committee that at the time he was unaware of its CIA connection.

- In 1967 "overseas" U.S. intelligence officers reported to Washington that Park "was thoroughly 'worthy of cultivation' and Park himself was apparently told that a headquarters official would be calling on him and might want to see him occasionally," the report said.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS were interested in Park because of his "close relations with key Korean officials," but again, said the committee, "there is no indication in intelligence files that this proposal was ever acted upon." It did not explore the possibility the files were incomplete or the operation covert.

But the committee reported that two years after the 1967 contact, it discovered, Park had dinner with three intelligence officers from the same agency, either at his home or at the George Town Club.

The report said "an intelligence officer who had just retired did in fact contact Park and arranged a private dinner gathering which was attended by two other intelligence officials."

"It was Park's recollection that the dinner was arranged by an intelligence officer who had been asked 'to look me up,'" the committee said. "The committee has been unable to ascertain why the dinner was arranged, and there are no records on the subject in intelligence agency files," the report said.

- In 1968, the report said, "Additional interest in Park was expressed by another intelligence agency which . . . was apparently considering recruiting Park as a 'spotter assessor' to be used to recruit and assess possible sources of foreign intelligence information, but there is no evidence that Park was actually used in that capacity."

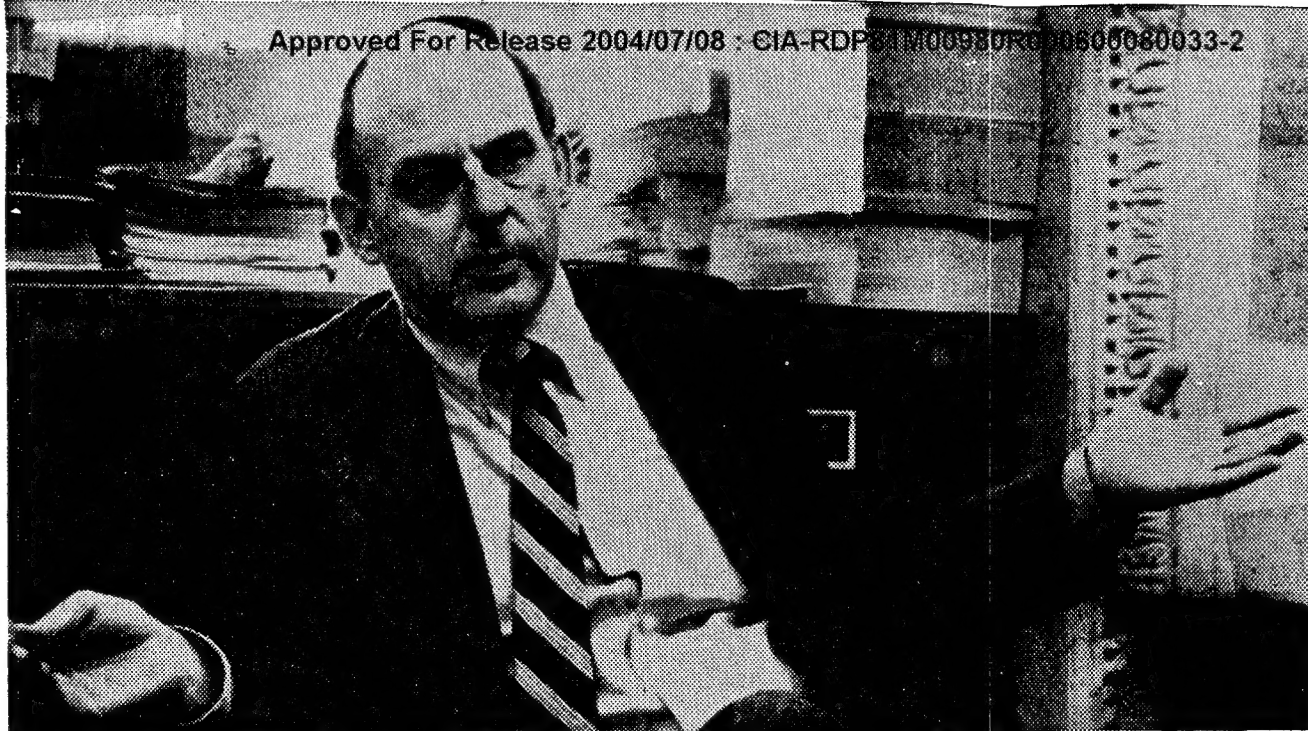
- During 1970-71, the report said, "Park apparently had numerous contacts with the CIA station chief in Seoul, although their recollections differ as to the substance of their relationship."

"PARK CONSIDERED the station chief to have been a close personal friend and he claimed that they exchanged considerable substantive information about Korean politics and political figures," the report said. During this period, U.S. officials have said, Park was an agent of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

"The station chief recalls their meetings to have been of a purely social nature rather than substantive," the committee said. "There are no records in intelligence files reflecting what transpired between them. Park

recalls receiving a case of liquor from the station chief on at least one occasion."

The committee also reported that intelligence files show that at one time intelligence officers considered using Park's George Town Club as "an operational base," but decided



—Associated Press

Sen. Adlai Stevenson, D-Ill., tells reporters he could not definitely rule out the possibility of a cover-up in the Korean influence buying scandal. Earlier the Senate Intel-

ligence subcommittee which he heads reported that high U.S. officials ignored warnings that the Koreans were trying to buy influence in Congress.

against it, and that two intelligence officers had business relationships with Park, although there was "no evidence" Park knew of their agency connection.

"In his testimony before the Senate Ethics Committee," the intelligence committee reported, "Park readily admitted to knowing several former intelligence officials, but the committee has discovered no evidence that any of those relationships affected the handling of the Korea case."

THE COMMITTEE ALSO reported it discovered no evidence that Park's relationship with executive branch officials who were then in positions to help him affected the flow of information about his influence-buying activities or caused the failure of U.S. agencies to halt the activities of Park or the KCIA.

In reporting this conclusion, the committee said that Park socially had met Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Attorney General John Mitchell, former Attorney General William Saxbe, former CIA Director Richard Helms and former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird.

He had lunch with the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in the office of the late Rep. John J. Rooney, visited Laird's office at least once, and knew former Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and visited his office at least twice, all after intelligence agencies knew of his influence-buying activities.

The committee said the visits to

Kleindienst came after March 1972, when he "closed down" for "lack of evidence" a Justice Department investigation into alleged illegal foreign lobbying by Park and Radio Free Asia.

THE COMMITTEE NOTED that after he left the Justice Department, Kleindienst "occupied space in Park's office building on a rent-free basis for two months" and got a \$4,000 retainer during the period for acting as Park's lawyer.

"There is no evidence that these relationships had been planned or discussed until after Mr. Kleindienst authorized the closing of the Park/ROFA investigation," the committee said.

"Mr. Kleindienst has told the committee that his relationship with Park in 1971 was not such as required him to disqualify himself from the case and we have discovered no evidence to the contrary," the report said.

The report shed no new light on three intelligence reports forwarded on a "top secret" basis in 1971 to Mitchell and Kissinger, then special assistant to the president for national security affairs, about Park's lobbying efforts, cash payments to one congressman and KCIA activities.

THE REPORT SAID Kissinger does not recall seeing any of the reports and Mitchell remembers one which mentioned congressional staff connections with the KCIA, which he said he brought to the attention of former House Speaker Carl Albert.